

# Empathy Circle

Participants, please type your name and intention below,

Date: 2015-08-27

URL: <http://j.mp/1U7tUkx>

## Intention Setting

**Our empathy circle intention is to foster an empathic way of being in ourselves, the circle and society.**

**We want to hear everyone's personal intention for taking part in this workshop. Write your name and the intentions you bring to this workshop below.**

**Name:** Edwin

**Intention:** I want to create tools for fostering more empathy in the world.

I'd like to make connections with people who value empathy and build a movement.

**Name:** Gabrielle Zhuang

**Intention:** I want to listen in and learn new tools for creating an empathic community.

**Name:** Xuan Zhao

**Intention:** I want to find creative, scalable ways cultivating empathy in our society and assess the validity of such intervention. Also incorporate empathy circle as an exercise in my empathy course.

**Name:** Lee-Anne

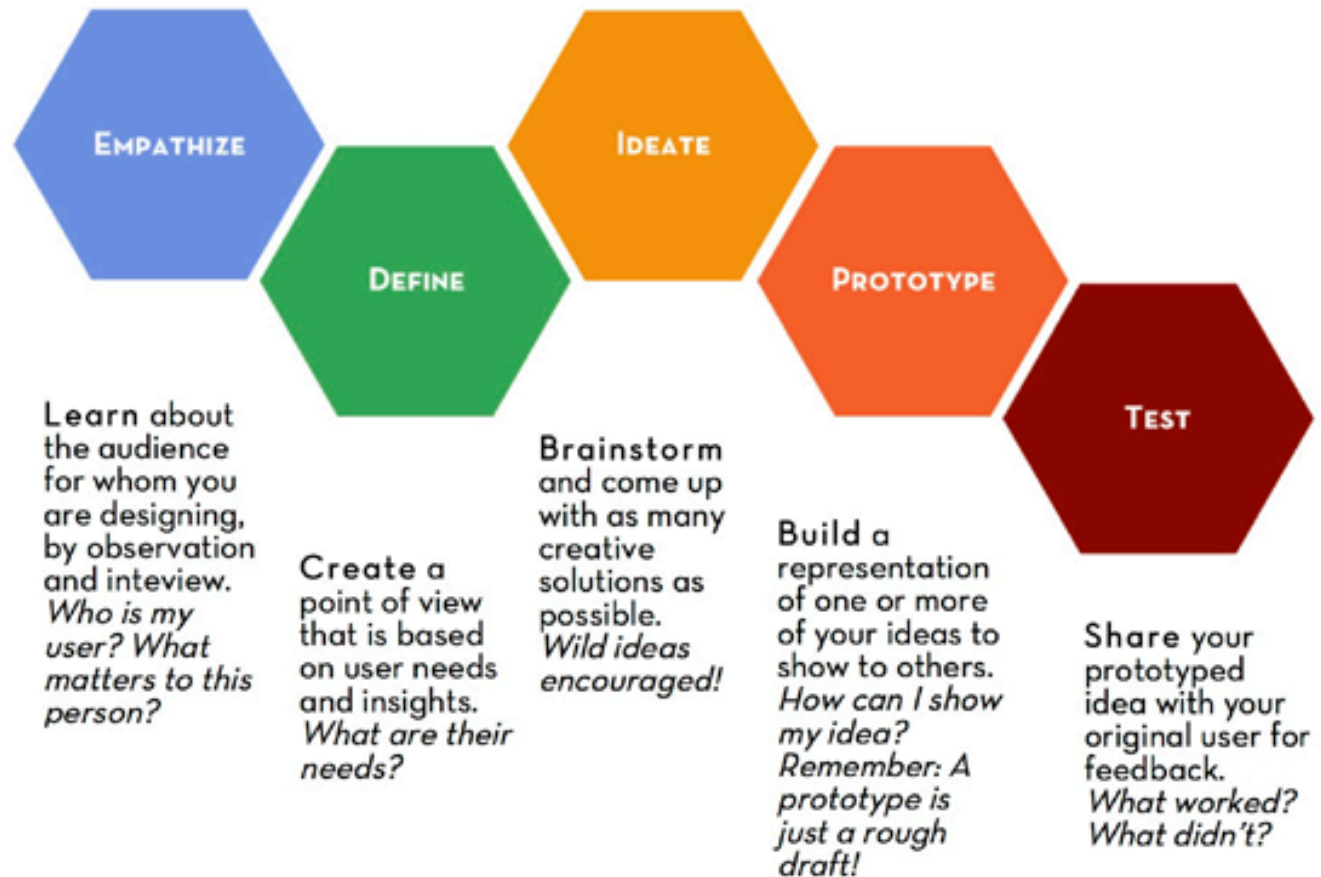
**Intention:** I set the intention to be open, welcoming, and lovingly allowing in all my communication practices, and to cultivate same for/with my dialogue partners.

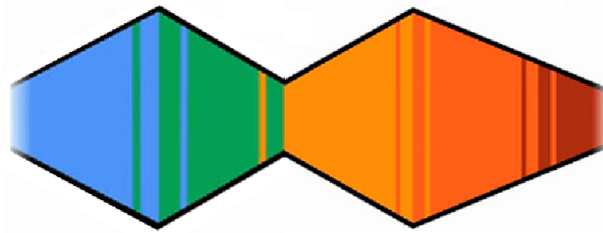
**Name:** Nicholas

**Intention:** To connect here with each of you, to get my microphone to work :), to learn and build with like-minded, like hearted people toward more empathetic and compassionate communities.

# Introduction to Empathic Design

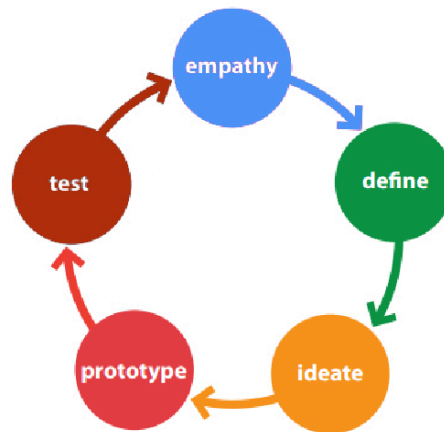
Based on the [Stanford d.school: Introduction to Design Thinking](#)  
(Boot Camp and Facilitator's Guide)





**Empathy Define Ideate Prototype Test**

Design moves between divergent (opening) and convergent (focusing)



**Design is iterative.** Keep going through the process until a refined product, service, process, experience or culture, etc. is created.

## Notes

- This will feel fast and rushed. That's ok.

## Contents

1. **empathy** Interview
2. **define** Empathy Map: Interpreting needs
3. **empathy** Check accuracy of insights
4. **define** Define one problem statement
5. **define** Translate the problem into a 'How Might We' challenge
6. **ideate** Brainstorm
7. **empathy** Share brainstorms
8. **prototype** Develop prototype
9. **test** Share solution and get feedback
10. **Create Shared Meaning**
11. **Homework**
12. **Feedback**

1

## Your challenge:

**How might we redesign the Empathy Circle to foster a more empathic way of being?**

empathy

### Interview a Fellow Participant 6 min each

**Sample questions** (you can come up with your own):

- What was your experience of the Empathy Circle?
- What areas worked well and why?
- What areas did you have trouble with and why?
- What did do you wish was different?
- Try asking “why?” 5 times to your partner's answers.

**Everyone write one question we could ask?**

1. How might we mitigate the perceived discomfort of repeating speaker's words in empathic listening?
2. Being missed can create dissonance how can we create more synchronization and resonance?
- 3.
4. What makes you feel good when you are trying empathy circle?
5. When obstacles to connection arise, what would be an agreed upon way of turning toward/including that?
- 6.

# Interview Transcripts:

Lee-Anne **interviews** Nicholas

**What was your experience of the Empathy Circle?**

brought an open and curious attitude  
connection has moved from various place, when we troubleshooted.

his attention is heightened to connection and how to monitor it throughout an interaction.

**In the experience of not having the microphone working , is there anything we could do to make you feel more included?**

when the voice is suppressed he relies more on body language and eye contact to establish trust and comfort.  
This is critical for him to express more vulnerably.

**What makes trying empathy circle for the first time more comfortable?**

smiling faces and attitude of play in learning makes it more comfortable to try an empathy circle for the first time.

## **Xuan interviews Gabrielle**

### **What was your experience of the Empathy Circle?**

G: I enjoyed the empathy circle when other people were connecting. As they were sharing, being heard clearly... When people were being received is what I appreciated the most. The experience of being witnessed by many feels more exposed than being witnessed by one. Brought up excitement, vulnerability, anxiety. brought up vulnerability and anx

### **Feeling othered? Is there something you would do differently or that the group could do differently,**

G: I think maybe the format could be that there is just - everyone gets a turn, go in the row, if the intention is for all voices to be heard. ensure that everyone participates once in the beginning. For me, chiming in and speaking up would be helpful however I wanted to see how it would unfold, how my experience would shift if I was missed. What would be the dynamic.

### **How can we create more resonance in the group?**

G: I think when I was speaking to Lee-Anne, she brought it back in and it was addressed in group. Addressing dissonance and disconnection openly is helpful. Creating more invitation for folks in the grp to participate. I like pauses and space. So it goes back to my dislike of parroting. You are rapidly speaking then talking, and then your partner has to reflect quickly. Inviting in some pause into the circle would be helpful for me to take in fully the experience

### **Would there be a way to participate without interrupting flow?**

X: WHEN someone is sharing and someone gives a thumbs up while others are sharing?

**G: Sure,** In GHO, some parts of human resonance is missing. Gestures are helpful in showing where people are at.

It's a good - if there are additional gestures that would help.

### **X Being the same same room would that help with the problems.?**

G: The experience of being othered and disconnection happen, can happen both in face to face and in GHO. Empathic connection can resolve it when invitations to increase comfort and connection.

### **X - So see it from a positive light?**

G: Maybe the experience of being missed is different in person than in GHO.

## **Gabrielle interviews Lee-Anne**

### **What was your experience of the Empathy Circle?**

Was multi faceted, as I resonated with multi perspectives.  
Our inability to hear nicolaus to  
Edwin setting up the space  
Xuan's contribution also struck me. While I was attending to my own thoughts.

### **What parts brought you the most joy and inspiration. and curiosity?**

The most inspiring experience is also the least joyful.  
curiosity and inspiration. curious of Gabrielle being othered. Xuan's words inspired me on different levels.

Joy: getting to hear Nicholas's voice  
was a great moment of Joy  
Smile and give nonverbal feedback. N thinks it makes a difference -- felt joy there as well.  
I feel a great deal of joy of everyone sharing.

### **What would be an agreed upon way to deal with issues?**

I would be reluctant to answer. There is a different mix in every group.  
If we come up with one solution, it might be irrelevant to another group that has a different technical glitch. Turn towards and include the obstacle in the discussion.

### **You're background as an educator, how will you incorporate this into education?**

Very exciting and joyful question!  
Three students and I are solving it together with Edwin. Talk to me in a few months.

## **Edwin interviews** Xuan

### **What was your experience of the Empathy Circle?**

X: I think it's full of inspiration. I took a lot of notes on what Edwin did. How he did it. What people did. Took notes on what people said. Gabrielle mentioned her resonance workshop which also inspired me. I am also here for theoretical and practical ideas about how to design good research. I am curious about how people with a suppressed modality take in the perspective idea. In my life, when I don't wear my glasses, I care less about what people think about how I look

### **How did you feel about the times when you have to wait and listen to others? Do you feel an urge to engage?**

X: I do feel engaged. At same time, I understand I need to respect other people's turns and suppress my urge. Lee-Anne had a great observation and wanted to jump in, yet realized I had to wait.

### **Any anxiety or wish for deeper involvement?**

Not anxiety, but yes wish to be involved more deeply. Will contact individuals later.

### **What was the most painful or uncomfortable part of empathy circle?**

X: I didn't experience pain, but it was

When Nicholas and Lee-Anne were on the tel, and I didn't know what to do and got distracted by my emails.

### **What would you do to improve the empathy circle to make it more empathic?**

X: I would include a snap with teens when a person makes a statement others agree with. But different groups have different characteristics, so I think we need to tailor the changes to different groups.

### **E: To show a sense of approval?**

X: Yes.


### **What comes up for you about the empathy circle?**

X: I am very curious about putting this into a study, and seeing how it is designed after several iterations and see how this helps conflict resolution.




## Check your interviews


A. Review the transcripts of the interview(s) you wrote. Edit, clean up and add comments. 5 min.

2	<b>Empathy Map: 5 min</b> <b>Insights and needs:</b> On your own, write down answers to the following questions. Sample <a href="#">feelings</a> & <a href="#">needs</a> . Printable: <a href="#">needs.pdf</a> & <a href="#">feelings.pdf</a>	
---	--	---

<b>What a notable aspects of your partner's experience that stands out? 5 min</b> What do they experience, think, see, hear, etc?	<b>What are related feeling?</b>	<b>What are related need(s)?</b>
<b>Sample</b> <b>Your Name:</b> Jane Interviewee Name: John <b>Insight:</b> John feels he is not doing the empathic listening well. He would like more guidance about how to do it and if he is doing it correctly  <b>Feedback:</b>	anxious frustrated discontented	understanding ease competence connected
<b>Your Name:</b> Gabrielle Zhuang Interviewee Name: Lee-Ann <b>Insight:</b> "multi faceted" Lee-Ann's experience included holding her own experience while hearing into the experience of others. Joyfully enthusiastic with bringing this work to the students  <b>Feedback:</b> yes, another need and insight. need to contribute to inclusion?	Enthusiasm, Joy Gratitude Inspiration	Further exploration Mutuality
<b>Your Name:</b> Edwin Interviewee Name: Xuan <b>Insight:</b> Xuan would like to bring in more participatory processes into the circle. for example ie teens include a snap when a person makes a statement others agree with.  <b>Feedback:</b>	curiosity inspiration	engagement fun inclusion deeper and further connection in the future
<b>Your Name:</b> Xuan Interviewee Name: Gabrielle <b>Insight:</b> People can feel disconnected while others are feeling engaged in the activity. Therefore introduce more participation is necessary. And it might also help if there is a way to check in how other people who are not speaking are currently feeling?	Anxiety, disconnection, disapointment curious	Being heard. Being engaged.

<b>Feedback:</b> check in on how people are feeling		
<b>Your Name:</b> Lee-Anne Interviewee Name: Nicholas <b>Insight:</b> When one channel of expression is suppressed, eye contact and body language help create a sense of safety and trust.  <b>Feedback:</b>	frustrated excluded	to be included to be heard to belong
<b>Your Name:</b> Nicholas Interviewee Name: Gabrielle <b>Insight:</b> Values and is interested in resonance, feeling felt and others feeling felt. Values inclusion, everyone's voice in.  <b>Feedback:</b>	enjoyment appreciation interest frustration	safety inclusion belonging
<b>Your Name:</b> Interviewee Name: <b>Insight:</b>  <b>Feedback:</b>		
<b>Your Name:</b> Interviewee Name: <b>Insight:</b>  <b>Feedback:</b>		

<b>3</b> 15 min <b>Check the accuracy of your insights</b> <b>Reflect and share your interpretations, gain feedback on how accurate you were and if there's more.</b>	
--	---

4	<b>Define one problem/pain/need statement</b> 2 min For example: John feels frustrated and discontented because he is not comfortable with empathic listening.  Vote on which problem to work on.	
---	--	---

**What is the need or problem you see:**

some feel there is a need for more participation and involvement.

**What is the need or problem you see:**

There is a need for checking in with all participants to see how safe and included each one feels.

edwin

Lee-Anne

Xuan

**What is the need or problem you see:**

Inclusion

More precise hearing

Feeling a missed communication/connection

**What is the need or problem you see:**

Feeling disconnected can happen and impede communication.

Nicholas


gabrielle

**What is the need or problem you see:**

Need refinement in intention about responsibility in reaching listener/speaker being received. (still cooking this...) How is the responsibility shared.. speaker's exp landing or not

**Merge problem Statements:**

There is a need for checking in with all participants to see how safe and included each one feels.

5	<p><b>Translate the problem into a ‘How Might We’ (HMW) challenge</b></p> <p>For example: How might we support people in feeling comfortable and connected when doing empathic listening?</p> <p>Vote on which problem to work on.</p>	
---	--	---

**How Might We...** check in with all participants to see how safe and included each one feels so that they feel connected?

**Nicholas, edwin**

**How Might We...** promote connection, inclusion, and safety in empathy circles?

**Gabrielle Lee-Anne, Xuan**

**Merge into one: How Might We...**

## 6

# Brainstorm

10 min

As a group brainstorm ideas below on how to solve your design challenge. Write your ideas in the space below. You can draw ideas on paper at home first.

### [Guide to brainstorming](#)

1. Defer judgment
2. Encourage wild ideas
3. Build on the ideas of others
4. Stay focused on the topic
5. One conversation at a time
6. Be visual
7. Go for quantity

**At home, take a piece of paper and divide it into 6 sections.**

On your own, imagine some solutions that may address your partner's needs. Do rapid brainstorming of wild and radical ideas, go for quantity not quality.

**Draw, sketch, diagram or write at least 6 new ways to address the challenge.**

Transfer the ideas below.

Save your paper, scan and email to Edwin afterwards

ideate

Copy your "how might we" challenge here

**How Might We... promote connection, inclusion, and safety in empathy circles?**

**Write Brainstorm Ideas Below**

Lee-Anne: Use a snap or “ho” (Native American Counsel practice) for passive observers to chime in, be heard, and participate in a way that is respectful to the flow.

listeners write what they are hearing in a google doc

Lee-Anne: At the outset of the circle, ask participants what/how they would feel included in the passive observing parts of the circle.

Lee-Anne: Remind team to use nonverbal language during the passive observation phase, so they can a) feel included, and b) contribute to the process. “ho!”-nb

Lee-Anne: Invite passive observers to comment in chat window...

Xuan: Each person has a set of signs with basic emotion words (e.g. joy, excitement, puzzle, curiosity, upset, anger) written on them that they can choose to hold up and signal what they’re feeling without interrupting the speaker.

Lee-Ann, Edwin

Xuan: Play a game at the beginning of an EC session to energize people and create bonds. Games might include: gift-giving, shared memory, three things, etc. (I can explain more about the games. They’re mostly improv games).

Edwin empathy circles specifically on empathy related to: connection, inclusion, safety

Edwin: practice practice practice circle

Edwin: do more pretest - of set up.

Edwin: Private message coach being each person at home

Edwin - ask for one word how are you now periodically.

Edwin - after each person reflects, the group does a shared movement..

oxytocin nose


Nicholas: more explicit visual signs, emoji to thumbs up. for some/most pieces.. having an ordered response(option) sequence, in which people can pass. Time ins (a pause to check in with internal exp) sharing exp (optional). Updating changing impact of the process and priorities (toward what’s most alive).

Gabrielle: Empathy requires resonance and vulnerability, for set-up, introductions  
Share a personal story

- 1) Share a heart story when you’ve experienced being heard/connected/a part of
- 2) Share a heart story when you’ve experienced being othered/disconnected

In order to get to know who you’re seeking empathy with

Stop and/or Slow Down-Dig into the moment, Staying dynamic, reprioritizing when things come up

<b>8</b>	<b>Based on feedback, develop one prototype</b> 5 min Get tangible. In your workbook, draw, sketch, diagram, role ll a prototype to address your partner's needs. Using any materials available, create a visual or physical model.	
----------	--	---

Xuan: Each person has a set of signs with basic emotion words (e.g. joy, excitement, puzzle, curiosity, upset, anger) written on them that they can choose to hold up and signal what they're feeling without interrupting the speaker. Nichlos: emoji  
Lee-Ann, Edwin



## **12 Feedback: I Like... Wish... What if...**

5 min

**On your own answer the following question about your experience with this design challenge.**

**When done - Share with the Team**

Go around and share your comments with the team.

### **I Like...**

**Name:** Edwin - everyone hung in there with the technical difficulties and tried to work with it. such a grounded group, the creativity tha

**Name:** Nicholas: that and how we came together to learn/get better at getting together

**Name:**Lee-Anne I Like how our obstacles were actually opportunities for further iteration.

**Name:** Gabrielle- The surprise of what the workshop brought open. A new format for connection Google Hangout. To meet other folks whose intention is to explore what promoting empathy can look like G

**Name:** Xuan - I like how candid and authentic people in expressing their positive and negative feelings.

### **I Wish...**

**Name:** Edwin - we can do another iteration. to see how it comes.

**Name:**Lee-Anne I Wish our culture embraced obstacles with open hearts so we could invite and keep as many participants as possible, in the dialogue.

**Name:** Nicholas: I wish we were in person :)

**Name:** Gabrielle: to refine the process of promoting empathy and that we were in person!!!

**Name:** Xuan -- I wish we can keep in touch and make this empathy movement going.

### **What if...**

**Name:** Edwin - we stay connected to see how we can collaborate together in creating more empathy and compassion in the world  
does an empathy circle at home and report back to the group

**Name:** Xuan - What if we take more than one new idea to create the new prototype?

**Name: Lee-Anne** What If obstacles in education brought people together to promote empathy and compassion?

**Name: Gabrielle-** What if the theme of empathy was brought into the issue social justice, particularly racial justice

**Name:** what if we recruited more diversity into this these groups!

